

Mandatory reference: 462  
File Name: 462maa\_050304\_cd36  
Revision: 05/03/2004



---

# *EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK*

## *Part 2, Civil Service*

---

Revised April 2004

# ***Table of Contents***

---

|       |                                       |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----|
| I.    | Introduction .....                    | 3  |
| II.   | Appraisal Periods .....               | 5  |
| III.  | Performance Plans.....                | 7  |
| IV.   | Progress Reviews .....                | 9  |
| V.    | Sources of Appraisal Information..... | 11 |
| VI.   | Appraisal Committees .....            | 14 |
| VII.  | Adjectival and Summary Ratings .....  | 22 |
| VIII. | Employee Feedback .....               | 21 |
| IX.   | Managing Performance Problems .....   | 23 |
| X.    | Forms .....                           | 25 |

# ***I. Introduction***

---

The ability of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to achieve its mission depends on its employees. The skills and abilities they use in carrying out their responsibilities determine how successful the Agency as a whole will be. Consequently, the Agency's Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) promotes linkages among the Agency's goals, strategic objectives of the Operating Unit, and the performance of unit employees. It also enhances accountability for results by linking employee performance plans to Operating Unit strategic objectives.

The EEP applies to all Civil Service (CS), Foreign Service (FS), Senior Foreign Service (SFS), and Schedule C employees, and all employees whose salaries are administratively determined. It does not apply to Senior Executive Service (SES) employees, Presidential Appointees, experts, or consultants.

The EEP Guidebook covers two different personnel systems -- FS (Part 1), and CS (Part 2) -- which are governed by different statutory requirements and ADS chapters. Each system has its own policies and procedures to evaluate and measure employee performance. Although the systems have some similarities, the EEP Guidebook provides a structure to highlight the different processes for the CS and FS evaluation programs. Furthermore, the Guidebook provides CS and FS employees, Rating Officials, and Appraisal Committee members with an overview of the program's policies and procedures, and detailed instructions on completing the Annual Evaluation Form (AEF). The EEP Guidebook Part 2 is a Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 462.

## **Employee Evaluation Process**

The EEP has a number of steps, starting with the development of individual performance plans and concluding with the development and review of the final written evaluation for each employee.

### ***Start of the cycle***

- Establishment of performance plans (work objectives and performance measures) with Appraisal Committee (AC) input.
- Discussions of career-enhancing assignments and career goals between the Rating Official and the employee.

### ***Throughout the cycle***

- Feedback and communication among the employee, Rating Official, and AC.

### ***Middle of the cycle***

- Mandatory mid-cycle review between the Rating Official and the employee.

### ***Completion of the cycle***

- Employee self-assessment input to the Rating Official.
- 360 degree input to the Rating Official.
- Appraisal drafted by Rating Official and reviewed by AC.
- Performance feedback between the Rating Official and the employee.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

In order for the EEP to be successful, a number of different parties must participate and share responsibilities on an annual basis. The roles and responsibilities of each of these parties are as follows:

### **USAID Principal Officer**

### ***Responsibility and Accountability***

- Communicate information on the evaluation process to the employees in the Operating Unit.
- Manage the Operating Unit's performance evaluation program.

- Establish internal deadlines for the Operating Unit, and ensure that the Operating Unit adheres to the EEP policies, procedures, and schedules.
- Establish membership and standard operating procedures for the unit's AC(s).
- Designate Rating Officials, who in most situations will be the employee's supervisor.
- Ensure the timely submission of Annual Evaluation Forms (AEFs) and other required information to the Office of Human Resources (M/HR).
- Ensure that written performance plans have been approved by ACs and given to all Operating Unit employees.

### **The Employee**

### ***Achieving Results***

- Participate in development of work objectives and performance measures with Rating Official.
- Track progress against work objectives and performance measures.
- Participate in mid-cycle review with Rating Official.
- Provide input into appraisal (self-assessment) and identify 360 degree input sources.
- Participate constructively in performance feedback session after appraisal is finalized.
- Prepare Employee Statement (optional).

### **Rating Official**

### ***Evaluation and Feedback***

- Develop work objectives and performance measures with each employee to be rated.
- Observe and evaluate employee performance, providing constructive and supportive feedback to employees throughout the entire rating cycle.
- Conduct a formal mid-cycle review.
- Gather performance information from the employee's self-assessment, 360 degree input sources, direct observation of performance, etc.
- Draft the AEF and the Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) and present them to the AC.
- Revise AEF as directed by the AC.
- Finalize the AEF by obtaining AC input and signed approval.
- Discuss final appraisal results and the SFW with the employee.
- At the end of the rating cycle prepare the final AEF, regardless of how long he/she has been the supervisor of the rated employee.

### **AC**

### ***Organizational Perspective***

- Establish internal operating procedures and deadlines to ensure fair treatment of all rated employees.
- Review and approve performance plans for all employees at the start of the evaluation cycle.
- Review, discuss, and recommend changes to the content of the AEF as appropriate and approve final AEF on all employees.
- Ensure timely, properly prepared, equitable, and objective evaluations for all employees.
- Make decisions concerning employee requests for AEF reconsideration.

### **AC Representative**

### ***Review and Approval***

- Review work objectives and performance measures.
- Ensure that all employees have met with Rating Officials at least once, normally at mid-cycle.

### **Office of Human Resources**

### ***Guidance and Support***

- Oversee implementation of the EEP and ensure that policies/guidance are adhered to throughout the process.
- Formulate policies, guidance, and training for the EEP.
- Work closely with Appraisal Coordinators in each Operating Unit to implement the EEP.
- Take appropriate action when an employee fails to follow the policies, procedures, or schedules of the EEP.

## ***II. Appraisal Periods***

---

The Agency's rating cycle is one year. All employees will be evaluated on their overall performance for the rating cycle. The CS annual rating cycle runs from January 1 through December 31.

The appraisal period begins when an employee reports to work in a USAID/W position. Rating Officials must prepare an AEF on an employee whenever the employee has served in a position for 120 days or more.

For CS employees, the minimum appraisal period is 120 days. A rating of record can be prepared once the minimum appraisal period has been met. If a rating of record cannot be prepared at the end of the rating cycle, the appraisal period must be extended (for example, if an employee's AEF starts anytime after September 1).

### **\*Appraisal Input Form**

\*The Appraisal Input Form (AIF), AID Form 400-1B (02/03), is used whenever an employee or Rating Official changes jobs within an annual evaluation period. The rater who is supervising the employee on December 31 is the rater of record and must complete the final AEF regardless of the number of days the employee has been under his/her supervision. The rater of record must use the AIF and any other 360 degree information to complete the final AEF.

- \*Guidelines for completing the AIF
  - ❖ Rating Official must have supervised the employee for at least 30 calendar days.
  - ❖ Rating Official completes AIF at least two weeks before either the employee or the Rating Official changes jobs.
  - ❖ AIF records performance for one to three work objectives with performance measures.
  - ❖ Rating Official provides employee with AIF at least five days prior to performance feedback meeting.
  - ❖ Rating Official holds mandatory meeting with employee to review and discuss AIF.
  - ❖ Employee may provide a written response to AIF.
  - ❖ Rating Official forwards AIF, with optional employee response, to employee's next Rating Official (or Administrative Officer or Executive Officer) within two days after completion.

### **TDY**

\*The AIF is also used for employees who go on extended TDY (more than 30 calendar days) as a means to record performance in a temporary assignment. The TDY supervisor must complete the AIF and follow all the applicable EEP rules and guidelines. The TDY supervisor must send the AIF to the employee's AMS, EXO, or other employee designated by the Principal Officer. This form is written by the rater as 360 degree input in the preparation of the employee's final AEF, but is not attached to the final AEF when it is submitted to M/HR.

### ***III. Performance Plans***

---

**Performance plans** are a reflection of an employee's position and the major responsibilities assigned to the employee. Performance plans establish the comprehensive standards of performance that the supervisor expects of the employee by the supervisor. These standards, known as work objectives and performance measures, are developed by Rating Officials (supervisors) in collaboration with employees within 45 days after the beginning of the rating cycle. Performance plans are also prepared within 45 days after an employee's assignment to a new position or when an employee is on a detail or on a temporary duty assignment expected to last more than 120 days.

**Work objectives** are results-oriented outcomes developed for two types of responsibilities representing distinguishable tasks or units of work: ongoing and specific. Ongoing responsibilities are continuing duties that are inherent to the position. Specific responsibilities involve results that can be achieved before the end of the rating period. The employee must have control over the function or activity. Do not develop work objectives that are not within an employee's control.

Work objectives must be commensurate with an employee's official position and must be within the control of the individual to achieve. The rater must identify the work objectives as either critical or noncritical. A critical work objective is defined as one that contributes to accomplishing organizational goals and objectives and is of such importance that unacceptable performance would result in an unacceptable performance in the position. A noncritical work objective is defined as one that, while sufficiently important to be documented on the AEF, would not result in an Unacceptable summary rating for the annual rating cycle if performance on this objective was unacceptable.

**Performance measures** are objective, measurable statements that specify the duties that the employee is expected to perform and how well the employee is expected to obtain the described results, or the manner in which certain duties must be performed. Performance measures address the quantity, quality, timeliness, cost effectiveness, or manner of achieving a work objective. Rating Officials are to establish performance measures at the effective level of performance.

**The AC Representative** is required to review and approve the work objectives and performance measures for all employees in his or her Operating Unit. During this review, the AC Representative must ensure that the work objectives and performance measures are reasonable for the specific employee and consistent with the objectives of the Operating Unit. The AC Representative must also review performance measures to ensure that they are not impossible to achieve.

Work objectives and performance measures are documented in Section 3 of the AEF and signed by the Rating Official, the employee, and the AC Representative. The AC Representative must sign the AEF first, then return it to the Rating Official. The Rating Official must sign the AEF the same day it is given to the employee. Signature by the parties indicates that work objectives have been established, approved, and communicated to the employee.

## **DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE PLANS**

Performance plans link the employee's expected performance to overall USAID goals and to the more specific strategic objectives of an Operating Unit. The Rating Official and the employee are encouraged to discuss the employee's career development needs and aspirations. The performance plan may reflect the results of these discussions by documenting progressively more challenging responsibilities and allowing the employee to demonstrate or develop his or her professional capabilities. Performance measures are intended to provide employees with fair and objective measures of the nature, timeliness, and quality of work required to successfully fulfill an individual work objective.

Performance plans reflect the quantitative, qualitative, timeliness, cost effectiveness, or manner of achieving aspects of performance. Quantitative measures may include results to be achieved within a specified time or may be direct linkages to Results Indicators in the Operating Unit's Strategic Plan. Qualitative measures include accuracy, quality of work, ability to coordinate, analyze, evaluate, etc. Almost all jobs involve both aspects of performance but in varying proportions depending on the nature of the job. Timeliness means the extent to which work must be accomplished within specified time frames or when or how quickly the employee must complete a task.

Performance plans must be collaboratively developed by the Rating Official and the employee. There are several ways in which a performance plan can be developed:

- The employee and the Rating Official discuss and develop the performance plan together;
- The employee provides a draft of a proposed performance plan to the Rating Official;
- The employee comments on a draft performance plan prepared by the Rating Official; or
- The performance plan is developed by the employee's work group or team and the Rating Official.

Although assignment of work is the primary responsibility of the Rating Official (supervisor), employee participation in developing work objectives is likely to promote fairer, more objective performance appraisals and result in improved work performance and motivation. Therefore, every effort must be made to encourage employee participation in the development of performance plans. If the Rating Official and employee cannot agree on specific work objectives and performance measures, the AC Representative must resolve the issue.

## **Preparing Work Objectives**

Rating Officials and employees must consider the following when drafting work objectives:

- Does the activity have a link to the Operating Unit's strategic objectives?
  - All employees may not be able to have responsibilities that link directly to an Operating Unit's strategic objective, but all employees can support the strategic objectives indirectly.
- Is the activity important enough to be evaluated?
  - Don't simply include work objectives to fill the space available.
- Is the activity in the employee's position description?
  - If an activity is not within the scope of an employee's position description, and it is not intended to provide the employee with an opportunity to demonstrate professional growth and potential, then it may not be an appropriate work objective.
- Does the employee have control over the function or activity?
  - Do not develop work objectives that are not within an employee's control.

## **Preparing Performance Measures**

Rating Officials and employees must consider the following when drafting performance measures:

- Does the performance measure address the quantity, quality, timeliness, cost effectiveness, or manner of achieving a work objective?
- Does the performance measure clearly explain how well a task must be performed?
- Does the performance measure require performance that is observable and measurable?
- Does the performance measure require reasonable but not perfect performance?
- Is the performance measure clear enough to be fully and completely understandable to the employee?



## ***IV. Progress Reviews***

---

The purpose of progress reviews is to ensure that efforts toward achieving results are progressing satisfactorily, and that Rating Officials let employees know how they are progressing. Progress reviews also are opportunities for employees to discuss career development goals and to promote a rapport between the Rating Official and the employee. Rating Officials are encouraged to provide frequent feedback on performance because, at the end of the year, an employee's final evaluation must not come as a surprise. During progress reviews, Rating Officials discuss an employee's performance to date, making adjustments to work objectives as necessary. This is also the time to inform an employee that his or her performance is less than satisfactory, and what must be done to improve performance. While continuous feedback is encouraged, it is mandatory that at least one progress review be held, normally at mid-point during the appraisal period. Rating Officials must not discuss an employee's performance with other employees in the same Operating Unit, except with members of the Operating Unit's AC, in their official capacity.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

By the mid-cycle progress review, employees must provide the Rating Official with the names of customers, peers, subordinates (if any), and any other person with whom they may have worked during the rating cycle who can provide the Rating Official with information about their performance.

During progress reviews, the Rating Official must discuss the employee's performance against each work objective and performance measure, the skills being used to achieve results, and any areas for improvement. The Rating Official and employee must ensure that the work objectives and performance measures established at the beginning of the rating cycle are still relevant. If changes need to be made, the Rating Official must discuss them with the employee, document them on the AEF, and have the AC Representative review and approve them.

The AC is responsible for ensuring that progress reviews are held. Each employee, Rating Official, and AC representative must sign the Mid-cycle block in section 1 of the AEF.

### **Preparing for the Progress Review**

To get the most out of a progress review, Rating Officials must be prepared. Before the progress review, the Rating Official must seek feedback from the 360 degree input sources provided by the employee or from other informed sources. The Rating Official must also review an employee's performance plan and, if needed, prepare amendments to work objectives or performance measures. Rating Officials must prepare an outline of what will be discussed and provide a copy to the employee after the meeting.

From this preliminary planning, the Rating Official must be able to identify the employee's strengths and weaknesses. Rating Officials are strongly encouraged to use the Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) (see Section X) as a tool for discussion. While the SFW can be an important tool, Rating Officials must be cognizant that for CS employees, summary evaluations must be derived from the ratings of work objectives and performance measures designated as critical elements. Therefore, discussion of specific skills must focus on how these skills are contributing to or hindering the achievement of results.

Employees must likewise be prepared for progress reviews. They must review any notes of their performance and past progress reviews and must prepare a list of points they want to discuss. These points might include their accomplishments, tasks not accomplished and why, planned work that needs clarification, and work performed but not planned.

Rating Officials are encouraged to document progress reviews and to share the documentation with employees. This encourages trust and ensures that the final evaluation will come as no surprise.

## Conducting the Progress Review

When conducting progress reviews, Rating Officials must encourage the employee to provide feedback. These meetings must be held privately to allow for full and frank discussions.

The Rating Official must focus on job performance and compare it to work objectives and performance measures for the entire period and not just the most recent period. Rating Officials must focus on *patterns of performance* rather than one-time mistakes. Each point must be supported with specific observations whenever possible. It is important that Rating Officials

- Identify any unforeseen impediments to performance and make adjustments accordingly.
- Ask the employee why there may be gaps in the progress toward results.
- Discuss specific plans for performance improvement.

If by mid-cycle an employee's progress towards achieving work objectives is unacceptable, the Rating Official must notify the employee in writing of his or her performance and give the employee an opportunity to improve performance. (See Section IX, Managing Performance Problems.)

The progress review must be concluded by summarizing the major points discussed and any actions that are to be taken. In this regard, the Rating Official, in consultation with the employee, must set specific dates for reassessing the progress the employee is making toward results.

## Tips for a Successful Progress Review

- Contact 360 degree input sources before the progress review to obtain feedback on performance.
- Ensure that employees understand what is expected of them.
- Ask employees for a status report on progress on work objectives.
- Motivate employees to do their best work and give them prompt recognition for their accomplishments.
- Serve as a bridge between higher management and employees by providing both parties constructive and objective information on employees' performance, need for improvement (if appropriate), and development needs.
- Use progress reviews to motivate employees, facilitate accomplishment of work objectives, revise performance plans when necessary, and obtain a broad range of information about performance.
- Resolve disagreements over work objectives and performance measures. If this is not possible, the points of disagreement need to be listed. If these disagreements are significant, the Rating Official and the employee must consult with the AC.

## ***V. Sources of Appraisal Information***

---

To obtain an accurate overview of the employee's performance, the Rating Official must gather and synthesize information from a variety of sources, including the employee's self-assessment, peers, customers, other managers, and subordinates. Such information is referred to as 360 degree input. This type of feedback provides information about the employee's performance on specific work objectives and appropriate skill areas. Additionally, gathering information from several sources reduces the potential for bias to enter into the performance ratings.

Since information about an employee's performance rests largely on feedback from 360 degree input sources in addition to direct observation and the employee's self-assessment, it is important that Rating Officials obtain information throughout the rating cycle. One means of accomplishing this is for employees to prepare a list of 360 sources, at the beginning of the rating cycle, for or with whom the employee believes he or she will be working and to give the list to the Rating Official, who will periodically contact them throughout the rating cycle. Another way is to establish direct contacts with individuals whom the Rating Official believes can provide information about an employee's performance.

### **360 Degree Input Requirement**

At the end of the rating cycle, all employees are required to submit to their Rating Official a written self-assessment and a list of 360 degree input sources. If the employee has previously supplied the Rating Official with a list of 360 degree input sources at the beginning of the rating cycle or by mid-cycle, the employee must validate or revise this list at the end of the cycle. Since it is expected that employees will list individuals who can provide information about their performance, Rating Officials are required to consider an employee's list of 360 degree input sources and to reach agreement with the employee on who will be contacted. Rating Officials must contact at least three individuals from an employee's list of 360 degree input sources, although they may contact more.

If a Rating Official and an employee cannot agree on the individuals who will be contacted, the AC Representative must be consulted to resolve the matter.

### **360 Degree Input Sources**

Feedback from 360 degree input sources must occur throughout the rating cycle. Listed below are several sources that a Rating Official may use to gather information necessary to make informed judgments about performance.

**Direct Observation and Work Products** - Rating Officials must consider the quality and quantity of an employee's work products.

**Self-Assessment** - Since employees are required to prepare an assessment of their own performance, Rating Officials must consider what the employee states about his or her progress towards meeting the performance standards, what, if any, problems prevented an employee from meeting such standards, and the quality of performance.

**Other Managers** - Obtaining feedback from other managers who have spent any substantive time working with the employee during the rating cycle provides additional evidence about the employee's work.

**Peers** - Peer input provides the Rating Official with opinions, observations, and judgments of coworkers or team members regarding an employee's performance. While peers may agree with each other when they observe the employee in the same context, it is possible that peers who interact with the employee for different reasons at different times may perceive the employee differently. These differences provide the Rating Official with important distinctions.

**Customers** - With the focus on quality and meeting customer expectations, using customer input is an excellent way to evaluate performance. Customers that are served by the employee, ranging from other USAID Operating Units to host country counterparts, can provide information on the quality of the products and services that are delivered by the employee. However, care must be taken because the customer is not always right or unbiased in providing information about an employee's performance. Consequently, it is important to compare expectations with performance and to understand the ever-changing customer requirements.

**Subordinates** – Rating Officials of supervisors are required to contact no fewer than two subordinates to get a perspective on the supervisor's human resources skills. Subordinates (U.S. Direct Hires, Foreign Service Nationals, or Personal Service Contractors) are able to provide feedback from a slightly different perspective than peers or other managers. They can provide reliable information about the employee's leadership, supervisory, and other development skills and the employee's ability to manage performance and conduct. Discussions with subordinates might focus on the employee's ability to structure work, provide performance feedback, foster a positive work environment, provide necessary resources, arrange training, and support career development. Further, information from subordinates can be useful where an employee's management style actually works against the achievement of results.

## Employee Self-Assessment

The purpose of the self-assessment is to give the employee the opportunity to provide written input to his or her appraisal by providing the Rating Official with relevant information about performance.

Accordingly, all employees are required to provide Rating Officials with a written self-assessment of *reasonable length* whenever a written evaluation is going to be completed. Along with a self-assessment, employees are to provide a list or validate a previous list of managers, peers, subordinates, or customers the employee worked with during the rating cycle who can provide the Rating Official with an assessment of the employee's performance and accomplishments.

The employee must provide the Rating Official with information about the quality of his or her performance during the rating period as it relates to the employee's work objectives and performance measures. This information must be specific on the how, what, where, and when of performance. In addition, the employee must provide an assessment of his or her strengths, motivations, disappointments, and frustrations. In order to convey the most valuable information, the employee must provide specific examples of events/activities that occurred throughout the rating period. The self-assessment will be more accurate if the employee has recorded dates and details of the accomplishment of work objectives.

A Rating Official is not obliged to consider an employee's self-assessment or list of 360 degree input sources if they are not submitted within reasonable time frames established by the Operating Unit. Under these circumstances, the Rating Official will evaluate an employee's performance based on the Rating Official's own direct observations and independently developed 360 degree input sources. Additionally, employees who do not respect the Operating Unit time frames may lose their opportunity to appeal to the AC regarding inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in the final AEF. (See Section VI, Appraisal Committees.)

## Tips on Preparing a Self-Assessment

- Keep an accomplishments file during the year and add to it as work gets done.
- Review your work objectives and self-assess your performance against each objective.
- List 360 degree input sources for each work objective. This will help the Rating Official decide what to ask the 360 degree input source. Provide current e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.
- Be specific and use examples. Explain what you did, how well you performed, what results you achieved, and what differences you made.
- Explain barriers that may have affected your performance.
- Be factual and concise.

- Keep self-assessments to a reasonable length.
- Be positive.

### **Obtaining 360 Degree Input Sources Information**

Rating Officials may gather 360 degree input information in a number of ways: through personal interviews, telephone calls, e-mail, or written responses to questions. While there is no preferred method of collecting information about an employee's performance, Rating Officials must be cognizant that ACs have responsibility for ensuring that appraisals are balanced, fair, and accurate and may question a Rating Official about the performance findings. ACs also are authorized to request from Rating Officials the names of individuals who were contacted and to call them.

### **Confidentiality**

If the Rating Official decides to conduct an interview, it must be held in a private setting where interruptions are unlikely to occur. This will enhance the information exchange and will increase the comfort level of the participants. The Rating Official is encouraged to take notes during such a meeting; however, these are considered to be the personal, working notes of the Rating Official and there is no requirement to maintain or provide these notes to the employee. (These notes may be the basis for advising the employee of significant performance deficiencies.)

### **Judicious Use of 360 Degree Input**

In order to uphold the ethical standards of USAID, Rating Officials must exercise discretion in seeking and using information through the 360 degree input process. Specific examples must be solicited, particularly in the case of outstanding or poor performance. The Rating Official must be alert for biased input or input that is based on the source's own self-interests. If a Rating Official has any concerns in this regard, he or she is advised to consult the Agency Ethics Officer.

## VI. *Appraisal Committees*

---

The responsibilities of an AC are to

- Ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the final written evaluations on all employees;
- Provide an organizational perspective to the evaluation on all employees;
- Work with Rating Officials who have employees with performance problems; and
- Resolve disputes regarding inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in employees' final written evaluations;

The Principal Officer of the Operating Unit (Assistant Administrator, USAID/W Independent Office Director) is responsible for determining the number of ACs for the Operating Unit and the members (and Chairpersons) of each. The Principal Officer, or his or her designee, chairs the AC and is held accountable for ensuring that the Operating Unit adheres to the EEP policies, procedures, and schedules. Ideally, all AC members have first-hand knowledge of the performance of every employee being reviewed by the committee. However, at least one member of the AC other than the Rating Official, if a member of the AC, must know the work of any individual employee to be reviewed by the committee. All members of the AC must be familiar with the work of the Operating Unit. Given the critical importance of the AC's responsibilities and the often sensitive nature of the decisions it is called upon to make, considerable care must be exercised in the selection of AC members. Judgment, discretion, and personal maturity are essential attributes for all AC members, as is a commitment to treat all rated individuals fairly and the ability to respect the confidential nature of the personnel evaluation process. AC members must have experience in positions of trust and responsibility and demonstrated capacity for independent decision-making.

To the maximum extent practical, members of the AC must possess a broad understanding of the functioning of the Agency and its various programmatic and support functions as well as personal knowledge of the work of employees being reviewed. At least one member of the AC must have direct personal knowledge of the rated employee being reviewed. It is also important that the composition of ACs reflect the Agency's commitment to diversity.

Only U.S. direct-hire employees may be AC members. Probationary CS employees are not eligible to be AC members. AC membership is drawn primarily from tenured staff. Untenured staff may be eligible for AC membership if

- They meet the criteria stated above, and
- The Principal Officer deems their membership appropriate and desirable in view of their prior work experience, special knowledge, skills, or roles and responsibilities within the Operating Unit.

In no event, however, may any AC be composed entirely of untenured employees.

The following are the most significant periods for AC involvement:

**Beginning of the rating cycle:** The AC Representative reviews and approves the work objectives and performance measures for all employees. The AC Representative ensures that the objectives are reasonable for the specific employee and consistent with the strategic objectives of the Operating Unit.

**Mid-Cycle:** The AC Representative reviews substantive changes to employee performance plans and certifies that mid-cycle progress reviews were held for all employees. The AC Representative

also discusses and works closely with Rating Officials who have employees with performance problems.

**End of the rating cycle:** The AC reviews the draft AEFs of each employee within the Operating Unit, discusses with each Rating Official the evaluation of his or her employees, and approves the final AEF.

## **Establishing ACs**

The Principal Officer of the Operating Unit is responsible for appointing the AC Representative and the AC membership, which must consist of no fewer than three members. Principal Officers are encouraged to name alternate members to ACs. The AC must consist of knowledgeable U.S. direct-hire (USDH) staff from the Operating Unit who are familiar with the unit's strategic objectives and who have knowledge of the performance of the employees being evaluated. USAID/W ACs must consist of both CS and FS employees to the extent the Operating Unit has both categories of employees. If there is more than one AC in an Operating Unit, the Principal Officer must ensure consistency among the ACs. For this reason, the Operating Unit Principal Officer must appoint an *AC Coordinator* to facilitate all activities with each AC Chairperson.

## **Multiple ACs**

USAID/W Bureaus and large Missions must form more than one AC to adequately deal with the employee evaluation workload. When multiple ACs are established, the Principal Officer must decide which employees will be reviewed by each AC.

## **Team-Based ACs**

Many USAID Operating Units are moving towards "team-based" organizational structures. Under these circumstances, the team, or part of the team, may constitute the AC appointed by the Principal Officer. The use of a team AC may provide a broader range of input to the assessment of team members.

## **Appointing AC Members**

When appointing AC members, the Principal Officer must consider the following desirable characteristics of an AC member:

- Possesses general knowledge of the duties of all the employees who will be reviewed by the AC;
- Has the confidence and respect of his or her peers;
- Has extensive experience in the Agency;
- Understands the strategic objectives of the Operating Unit;
- Understands and appreciates the roles of the organizational elements of the Operating Unit;
- Is known as being fair and objective; and
- Has supervisory experience.

The Principal Officer also must plan around known assignment changes and appoint AC members who are likely to be able to serve for the full rating cycle.

## **The Number of Members on an AC**

Each AC must consist of a minimum of three members, who can review the evaluation of any employee. If routine absences and recusals reduce AC membership to less than three, the Principal Officer must designate more than three members. When appointing AC members, Principal Officers must make every effort not to appoint individuals who are expected to leave the Operating Unit as a result of reassignment, transfer, or retirement before the end of the rating cycle.

## **Recusal of AC Members**

Generally, all members of an AC also will perform the duties of a Rating Official. AC members must recuse themselves as AC members when the AC reviews draft AEFs they prepared as Rating Officials. The Rating Official must discuss the draft AEF with AC members but he or she must not participate in AC deliberations of the appraisal. *This means that the Rating Official must leave the area where the AC is*

meeting. This will ensure that the deliberative process is not influenced by the presence of the Rating Official.

### **Vacancies and Absences on an AC**

AC members cannot delegate their membership responsibilities. An AC member must notify the Chairperson of any anticipated absences that may affect the AC's operations. In instances where the absence is prolonged, it would be appropriate for the Principal Officer to name a qualified alternate who will participate in the activities that the AC member will miss.

### **Confidentiality**

The deliberations of ACs are confidential and must not be discussed with individuals not participating in the AC process. Rating Officials may be required to submit the names of 360 degree input sources to ACs, but the feedback that was given to the Rating Official and the feedback that may be given to the AC is considered confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone else.

It is a violation of the EEP policies and procedures for AC members and other individuals participating in the deliberations of an AC to reveal AC discussions to those not authorized to receive such information.

### **Discipline**

Principal Officers must advise the DAA/M/HR of any instance when EEP policies, procedures, or schedules have not been followed. The DAA/M/HR will initiate disciplinary action against, or deny bonuses to, any AC members, Rating Officials, or other employees who fail to follow the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EEP. These actions will be noted in the employee's Official Performance File for one year.

Further, the DAA/M/HR has the authority to take disciplinary action against AC members and Principal Officers if AEFs for which they are responsible are submitted after the established Agency deadline.

## **AC Duties**

### **The First 45 Days of the Rating Cycle**

#### *Reviewing Work Objectives and Performance Measures*

The AC Representative will review and approve the work objectives and performance measures of all employees. This means that the AC Representative will ensure that each employee's work objectives and performance measures are clear, concise, and measurable. The AC Representative will ensure that work objectives are consistent with the Agency's goals and the Operating Unit's strategic objectives.

When preparing to review employee performance plans, the AC Representative must have the following:

- Each employee's draft work objectives and performance measures;
- The Agency's goals and Operating Unit's strategic objectives; and
- Staffing patterns and position descriptions.

The AC Representative must apply the standards of review established for work objectives and performance measures in Section III, Performance Plans, of this Guidebook.

### **During the Rating Cycle**

#### *Reviewing Revised Performance Plans*

At any time during the rating cycle, Rating Officials and employees may need to revise the employee's work objectives or performance measures for a variety of reasons. The AC Representative must review and approve all substantively revised performance plans. The AC



Representative may authorize minor revisions of work objectives or performance measures. In cases where revisions are made to CS employees' performance plans within the last 120 days of the rating cycle, the rating cycle will be extended long enough to meet the minimum appraisal period.

#### *Mid-Cycle Progress Review Certification*

The AC Representative must certify that formal mid-cycle reviews were held for each employee. The AC Representative must sign and date the appropriate block in section 1 of the AEF.

The AC Representative must counsel Rating Officials who fail to hold progress reviews and must inform the Principal Officer of all such Rating Officials.

### **End of the Rating Cycle**

#### *Drafting AEFs*

Rating Officials must not share the draft AEF with the employee until after the AC has reviewed and approved the document.

#### *Reviewing the AEF*

The AC will review each employee's draft AEF and SFW and discuss both documents with the Rating Official. AC members must determine the following:

- Did the Rating Official accurately and objectively evaluate the employee's performance against his or her work objectives?
  - Is there any conflict between the information in the AEF and what the AC knows about the employee's performance?
  - Should the AC request additional information from the Rating Official or other sources to resolve the conflict?
- Did the Rating Official keep the draft AEF confidential and not share it with the employee?
- Did the Rating Official contact appropriate 360 degree input sources?
  - Did the Rating Official contact at least three individuals agreed upon with the employee from the employee's self-assessment?
  - Does the AC need to ask the Rating Official for the names of the individuals contacted?
- Did the Rating Official consider the self-assessment?
  - Did the employee submit the self-assessment in a timely manner?
- Did the Rating Official consider an employee's AIFs?
  - In cases where an employee served in a position for more than 30 days, are all AIFs attached to the draft AEF?
- Did the Rating Official consider and attach any statements from the Offices of Financial Management, Procurement, or General Counsel?
- Is the AEF well written?
  - Is it internally consistent?
  - Is it free from inadmissible comments? (See list below.)
- Did the Rating Official discuss his or her assessment of the employee's overall performance, skill areas, potential, and areas for improvement in section 4 of the AEF?
- Has the Rating Official prepared adjectival ratings on all work objectives and performance measures for employees?
  - Is the written narrative consistent with the adjectival ratings for each work objective and performance measure?
  - Are there sufficient examples of specific performance?
  - Are the adjectival ratings and narrative based strictly on the employee's performance against work objectives and performance measures?
  - Is the summary rating noted in the appropriate block in section 1 of the AEF and was it derived from the rating of work objectives?
- Has the Rating Official completed the SFW?

- Is the employee a Rating Official who failed to follow the policies, procedures, and schedules of the EEP?
- Was the employee given written notice of substandard performance at any time during the rating cycle?
  - Does the AC have copies of the written notice?

The AC has the authority to determine the content of the final AEF. In consultation with the Rating Official or based on information that is made available to the AC, draft AEFs will be changed to correct any inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions. The changes will either be made by an AC Representative or the AC may direct the Rating Official to make the changes. It is particularly important that ACs carefully review all AEFs that document either substandard or exceptional performance to ensure that they are fair, balanced, and accurate.

*Examples of Inadmissible Comments:*

- Reference to race, religion, sex (does not extend to the use of Mr., Mrs., Ms., first names, or personal pronouns), national origin, political affiliation, and age.
- Retirement, resignation, or other separation plans.
- Grievance, equal employment opportunity, Merit Systems Protection Board, or other proceedings/results.
- Method of entry into the Agency (IDI, etc.).
- Reference to private U.S. citizens by name.
- Participation or nonparticipation in any organization composed of employees that exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with foreign affairs agencies concerning grievances, personnel policies, and practices.
- Ratings for earlier periods prepared by other Rating Officials.
- Reluctance to work voluntary overtime.
- Leave record, except in the case of unauthorized absences that affect performance.
- Letters of reprimand.
- Negative reference to use of the dissent channel or direct or indirect reference to, or consideration of, judgments in dissent channel messages as a basis for an adverse evaluation of performance. When the rated employee's expression of dissenting views on policy, outside of the dissent channel, raises substantial questions of judgment relevant to the employee's performance, it may be the subject of comment. However, general comments may not be used to get around the proscription of this section. Specific instances must be cited.
- Negative or pejorative discussion of the performance of another identifiable employee. For example, Rating Officials cannot state, "the employee quickly brought order out of the chaos left by his predecessor." On the other hand, the description, "the employee is the best administrative officer I have supervised in the past 10 years" is acceptable.
- Specific identification by Rating Officials of physical handicaps or medical problems (including alcoholism, drug abuse, or rehabilitation efforts). General reference may be made to confirm knowledge of a medical problem to the extent it affects job performance. Rated employees may discuss a health problem in specific terms if they believe it has affected their performance.

*Assigning Adjectival Ratings*

Every employee must receive an adjectival rating for each work objective, and an overall summary rating (Exceptional, Excellent, Effective, Needs Improvement, or Unacceptable). ACs may not prescribe a distribution of summary rating levels within the Operating Unit (e.g., the AC may not require that no more than 5 percent receive Exceptional, 10 percent receive Excellent, etc.). The

summary rating must be derived from the rating of performance of each work objective. See Section VII of this Guidebook for instructions on how to derive a CS summary rating.

### **Resolving Discrepancies or Conflicts**

ACs must attempt to resolve differences of opinion about the content of AEFs with Rating Officials. However, ACs are authorized to request the names of 360 degree input sources from Rating Officials and to call them. ACs also are authorized to request a copy of the employee's self-assessment and to meet with the employee, if appropriate. ACs may request documentation retained by the Rating Official and used by him or her to support an evaluation, or any other documentation the AC deems appropriate.

ACs must consider recommendations from Rating Officials to revise AEFs, if requested by an employee. ACs must limit their consideration to inconsistencies, factual errors, or gross omissions in the final AEF. An employee may discuss the matter with an AC if the Rating Official does not recommend changes. An employee also may submit documents to the AC to support his or her request.

If an employee does not submit a self-assessment in a timely manner and the Rating Official prepares an AEF based solely upon his or her observations and documentation from the 360 degree input sources he or she developed, the employee may not request a Rating Official or an AC to revise his or her AEF.

### **Revising AEFs**

If directed by an AC, the Rating Official must revise AEFs as soon as possible after the AC meeting to ensure that the employee will have 10 work days in which to review the AEF, request changes if appropriate, prepare an Employee Statement, and sign the AEF for timely submission to M/HR.

## ***VII. Adjectival and Summary Ratings (CS)***

---

### **Adjectival Ratings**

Each work objective and performance measure for all employees must be assigned an adjectival rating, which is indicative of the employee's performance. Use the following rating scale to determine the adjectival ratings of all employees.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Exceptional</b>       | Work performance always exceeds established performance measures and expectations.                              |
| <b>Excellent</b>         | Work performance almost always exceeds established performance measures and expectations.                       |
| <b>Effective</b>         | Work performance consistently meets and occasionally exceeds established performance measures and expectations. |
| <b>Needs Improvement</b> | Work performance meets some established performance measures and expectations.                                  |
| <b>Unacceptable</b>      | Work performance does not meet established performance measures or expectations.                                |

### **Summary Ratings**

For employees only, Rating Officials must assign, and the AC must review and approve, a summary rating based on the ratings of the employee's individual work objectives. The employee is given an adjectival summary rating based on the five-level scale below. The summary rating is derived directly from the ratings of individual work objectives and may not be based on other factors. The process of deriving a summary rating is described below.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Exceptional</b>       | A summary rating at the Exceptional level must be assigned when all critical elements are rated at the Exceptional level and no critical element is rated lower than Exceptional.                 |
| <b>Excellent</b>         | A summary rating at the Excellent level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Excellent level and no critical element is rated lower than Excellent.                         |
| <b>Effective</b>         | A summary rating at the Effective level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Effective level and no critical element is rated lower than Effective.                         |
| <b>Needs Improvement</b> | A summary rating at the Needs Improvement level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Needs Improvement level and no critical element is rated lower than Needs Improvement. |
| <b>Unacceptable</b>      | A summary rating at the Unacceptable level must be assigned when any critical element is rated at the Unacceptable level.   |

The adjectival and summary ratings are entered as "pen and ink" notations on the printed AEF.

## VIII. Employee Feedback

Rating Officials are required to conduct end-of-year performance reviews with employees, explaining the evaluation, discussing areas for improvement, and considering possible career-enhancing assignments for the next rating cycle.

Rating Officials must provide the employee with a copy of the AEF and SFW. Rating Officials also are to allow an employee 10 days in which to review his or her AEF and to comment in the Employee Statement.

If an employee finds factual errors, inconsistencies, or gross omissions in his or her AEF, the employee must notify the Rating Official immediately. The Rating Official must recommend to the AC either to approve or disapprove changes to the AEF. If a Rating Official does not recommend changes to an AEF, an employee can request a meeting with the AC and may submit documentation verifying the factual errors, inconsistencies, or gross omissions. The AC must communicate to the employee in writing its decision, which is final.

### Giving and Receiving Feedback

The Rating Official must prepare for each feedback session. This involves determining which topics to discuss and the overall approach to be used. Following are some guidelines on how to give effective feedback.

| Effective Feedback Suggestions   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Suggestions  | Examples  |  |
|  | Effective   | Ineffective  |
| Focus feedback on behavioral, not personal, characteristics.                               | <i>You tend to raise your voice with other team members during everyday discussions, and this behavior is inappropriate.</i>  | <i>You have an abrasive personality.</i>                       |
| Give specific statements when possible; support general statements with specific examples. | <i>Your presentation on the Hill demonstrated exceptional communication skills in describing how USAID coordinated with the State Department in the design of our democracy strategy.</i> | <i>You are a very good speaker.</i>                            |
| Use descriptive rather than judgmental language.   | <i>When you close your door upon arrival to the office, and leave it closed most of the day, your coworkers see you as inaccessible and unfriendly.</i>                                   | <i>You are lousy at interacting with others in the office.</i> |
| Make feedback clear, direct, and to the point.   | <i>You need to reduce the use of informal language in your writing. For example, in this memo...</i>  | <i>You need to work on your writing skills.</i>                |

| Effective Feedback Suggestions                                  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Suggestions   | Examples   |   |
|   | Effective  | Ineffective   |
| Direct feedback toward actions within the employee's control.   | <i>Your presentations would be more effective if you look up from your notes more and establish eye contact with the audience.</i>                                   | <i>You would be a more effective officer if you had a Ph.D. in economics.</i>       |
| Conduct feedback immediately.                                   | <i>Yesterday you missed the reporting deadline again. This has happened four times since fall, and each time I brought it to your attention.</i>                     | <i>Last May you missed a reporting deadline and four others before that.</i>        |
| Plan feedback carefully.  | <i>I have carefully reviewed your objectives and performance to date and have specific topics I would like to discuss my observations and 360 feedback with you.</i> | <i>I guess it's time to have a mid-period review. What shall we talk about?</i>     |
| Avoid interpreting the employee's actions. Summarize behaviors. | <i>I noticed that recently you missed the filing deadline on several reports.</i>  | <i>You must really hate writing those reports since you skip them all the time.</i> |

## ***IX. Managing Performance Problems***

---

When an employee's performance is substandard, the Rating Official must inform the employee immediately of his or her substandard performance and identify ways for improving it before the end of the appraisal period. No performance appraisal must come as a surprise to the employee at the end of the rating cycle. For this reason, Rating Officials are encouraged to hold progress reviews throughout the rating cycle, not just one at mid-cycle.

### **Notifying the Employee and the AC**

Throughout the rating cycle, Rating Officials must be requesting and receiving information from 360 degree input sources on an employee's performance. When there is sufficient evidence to indicate that an employee's performance is substandard and that he or she may not meet established work objectives and performance measures by the end of the rating cycle, the Rating Official must notify the AC Representative. The notification must indicate that the employee has performance problems and that steps will be taken to seek improved performance by the end of the rating cycle. The AC Representative may also provide advice and assistance to the Rating Official to increase the possibility that the employee will succeed in improving his or her performance. In all cases, the Rating Official must meet with the employee and discuss the performance and jointly determine ways for *improving performance*.

If by mid-cycle an employee's progress towards achieving work objectives is unacceptable, the Rating Official must notify the employee in writing of his or her performance and give the employee an opportunity to improve performance. (See Opportunities to Improve, below.)

If performance problems continue and it does not appear that performance will improve to an acceptable level by the end of the rating cycle, the Rating Official must inform the employee immediately. It is important to inform CS employees that poor performance may result in denial of a within-grade increase or a notice of unacceptable performance.

When it appears that performance is not going to improve, it is absolutely essential that the Rating Official retain all documentation -- from personal observations, examples of work products, and information from 360 degree input sources -- to support any further action. It is equally important that the employee also document his or her performance. The Office of Human Resource's Labor and Employee Relations staff (M/HR/LERPM) are available to provide advice and be consulted when documenting performance problems.

### **Opportunities to Improve**

When performance fails to significantly meet the performance measures established for a work objective, the Rating Official must notify the employee in writing that the performance is unacceptable and that the employee will be given an opportunity to improve. Employees must be provided with examples of poor performance.

When an employee's performance is unacceptable in one or more critical elements, the Rating Official must prepare a notice of unacceptable performance and give it to the employee. The Rating Official may give the notice to an employee at any time during the rating cycle, so long as the employee has been under established and approved work objectives and performance measures for at least 120 days. If the employee's performance is unacceptable near the end of the rating cycle, and the opportunity period given to the employee to improve performance extends beyond the end of the rating cycle, the rating cycle will correspondingly be extended. At the end of the opportunity period, the Rating Official will give the employee a rating of record for the rating cycle and notify the employee as to whether performance improved to an acceptable level. While the opportunity period will vary with the nature of the performance problem, the employee must be given at least 30 days to improve performance. The notice must identify:

- Which work objectives are being performed at the unacceptable level;
- What is needed to perform at a level above unacceptable;
- A definition of the performance measures at the Needs Improvement rating level;
- The assistance that will be provided;
- The period of time during which performance is to improve; and
- The consequences for failing to improve performance.

If the employee improves and demonstrates acceptable performance during the opportunity period, the supervisor must retain the notice of unacceptable performance for one year from the date the employee received the notice. At the end of the period, if performance has not improved, the rater must propose action to remove, reassign, or reduce the grade of the employee.



## ***X. Forms***

---

The EEP utilizes the following four forms:

| <b><i>Document</i></b>                                      | <b><i>Purpose</i></b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)<br/>(AID Form 462-1)</b>    | To document work objectives and performance measures, completion of the mid-cycle review, and the annual performance evaluation. The rater submits this to M/HR.  |
| <b>*Appraisal Input Form (AIF)<br/>(AID Form 400-1B)</b>    | To document performance when a supervisor or employee changes assignment or responsibility and when the employee has been supervised for at least 30 calendar days.   |
| <b>Employee Statement (ES)<br/>(AID Form 462-2)</b>         | To enable employees to comment on the evaluation of their performance. This statement is attached to the AEF and submitted to M/HR.   |
| <b>Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW)<br/>(AID Form 462-3)</b> | To provide feedback and career guidance to employees. This worksheet is reviewed by the AC at the same time as the AEF, and then given to the employee. It is not submitted to M/HR. In completing this worksheet, the Rating Official and AC must take into account the position grade (CS) of the employee. |

All five sections of the AEF are completed for a final annual evaluation. Although space is provided for two full pages of narrative in Sections 4 and 5 of the AEF, there is no requirement to fill the entire space. It is required that the work objectives and performance measures be addressed in Section 4 and that Section 5 contain an assessment of the employee's overall performance, skill areas.

When completing the AEF and ES, it is not permissible to exceed the space allowed. You must complete the forms in 10 point Universal font only (or 10 or 12 pitch type if you are using a typewriter).